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ANTHROPOLOGY AT ITHACA

W J MCGEE

The recent meetings of affiliated scientific societies at Ithaca illustrate well the importance of the role assumed by anthropology on the stage of scientific progress; and this despite the fact that the only organization nominally devoted to the science of man was represented by but few members and fewer formal communications.

Among the instrumentalities maintained by scientific men for the promotion of science in America, two are preëminent. The first of these is the American Association for the Advancement of Science, an organization just preparing to celebrate its semi-centennial. For a half century it has diffused interest in scientific matters among the people of the country by means of a series of migratory meetings, whereby the citizens of different sections have had opportunities to become acquainted with scientific men and methods; at the same time it has advanced science directly by stimulating research, bringing investigators in contact, and affording some opportunity for publication. At the outset the two functions were fairly balanced, though the latter was deemed paramount, and gave name to the organization; but as time passed, and as the functions were fixed by exercise, the former office gradually became more prominent, and today the Association is primarily an instrumentality for diffusing interest in science. The second preëminent instrumentality is the American Society of Naturalists, a comparatively young organization just past its sixteenth annual meeting. Projected modestly as a means of bringing the naturalists of eastern United States in contact during the winter holidays, the Society has gained gradually in importance, and its function has strengthened by exercise and, at the same time, developed in ways hardly foreseen at the outset; so today this somewhat general society does noble duty as a nucleus about which scientific societies of more special character cluster freely. Accordingly each annual meeting of the Naturalists and affiliated societies marks an event in American scientific progress; and it is noteworthy that the chief impetus lies in the direction of advancement through the promotion of research and the free

discussion of its results by students specially fitted through training to offer constructive suggestions and contributory criticism. Thus the important function gradually thrown off by the older instrumentality has been gradually assumed by the younger one, and the assemblage of social conditions encouraging popular meetings in summer and more special meetings in winter seem to be met by the division in labor and promise to render the two preëminent instrumentalities for American scientific progress complementary, coequal in usefulness, and mutually beneficial.

In some respects the two instrumentalities stand in sharp contrast. The older organization has always been a definite unit, undergoing differentiation slowly through the development of essentially subordinate sections and subsections, while the younger merely serves as a nucleus in which the activity is limited (although of high order), yet about which special organizations gather and undergo ready differentiation without obstruction from predetermined boundaries quite unto the limits fixed by consensus of judgment at each meeting; the characteristic of the older body is a fixed organization with changing personnel, that of the newer a fairly persistent personnel with a constantly changing organization; the vitality of the older body may be likened to that of animal or plant in which the structure outlasts the constituent elements, while the activity of the younger may be compared to that of social phenomena in which the constituent elements shape and constantly reshape the structure in such manner as partly to meet and partly to mold conditions; so that although the older organization is notably spontaneous among the scientific bodies of the world, the younger is much more spontaneous. The success of the American Society of Naturalists must be ascribed largely to its eminent plasticity, the readiness with which it reflects the needs of scientific men from season to season; and it is significant that the chief changes in organization of the American Association during the last score of years have lain in the direction chosen by the younger society.

Certain contrasts between the two dominant scientific instrumentalities of America are especially significant to anthropologists. The Association comprises nine sections, of which four, together with a part of the functions of a fifth, pertain to the physical in contradistinction from the natural sciences, while of the remainder only one pertains nominally to anthropology

proper and another (section I, Social and Economic Science) to what may be called the applications of anthropology—*i. e.*, less than one-fourth of the organization and less than half of its “natural” side relates to man as an object of research. Taking the Ithaca meeting as an illustration (and it may fairly be regarded as typical), the affiliated societies clustered about the Naturalists are much more conspicuously anthropic. The Naturalists’ program included seven papers, of which two (Paleontology and Botany) related exclusively to subhuman organisms and the remaining five (Anatomy, Physiology, Psychology, Developmental Mechanics, and Morphogenesis) chiefly or exclusively to the human organism; the Association of American Anatomists was concerned primarily with human phenomena; the Association for Botanical Morphology and Physiology dealt with subhuman structures and functions; the American Morphological Society touched the human and the subhuman perhaps equally; the American Physiological Society gave chief attention and emphasis to human phenomena; the American Psychological Association dealt wholly with man, and the Section of Anthropology of the American Association for the Advancement of Science was concerned exclusively with man in his biotic and demotic aspects; so that certainly three-fourths and probably four-fifths of the communications and discussions might have been presented appropriately before an anthropologic society. This condition of things, so clearly displayed at the Ithaca meeting, manifestly indicates growing recognition of the importance of scientific study of mankind.

Although the nucleus of the group, the American Society of Naturalists was rather inconspicuous on the program at Ithaca. Its meetings were practically limited to a single afternoon session for the transaction of routine business and the presentation of seven ten-minute papers on “The biological problems of today,” together with an informal business session and the annual dinner—a function not to be neglected in considering the role played by this society in strengthening the bonds of union among scientific specialists. The Association of American Anatomists (Dr Frank Baker, President; Dr D. S. Lamb, Secretary-Treasurer) held four or five half-day sessions; the Association for Botanical Morphology and Physiology held two sessions;

the American Morphological Society held three or four sessions ; the American Physiological Society held about three busy sessions ; the American Psychological Association held four half-day sessions, during one of which it was divided into sections ; the Section of Anthropology of the American Association devoted two half-day sessions to the reading of papers, adjourning to meet with the Psychologists during one half day and with the Naturalists during another. Over a hundred formal communications were made before the several societies, and the contributions to knowledge through discussion were notably large and valuable.

The contributions to somatology, of which most were presented before the Association of Anatomists, were especially numerous ; Dr George A. Dorsey, of Chicago, communicated a "Description of two Kootenay skeletons" and "Two examples of unusual ossification of the first costal cartilages," with specimens ; Dr Woods Hutchinson, of Buffalo University, described "A thoracic index ;" Dr Lamb, of Washington, presented a careful paper on "Pre-Columbian syphilis," illustrated by specimens, while Dr E. R. Hodge, of Washington, discussed the "Relation of sex to the size of the articular surfaces of long bones." In his discussion of "The biological problems of today" Professor Burt G. Wilder, of Cornell, set forth the significance and the course of development of certain structures in the human brain, while one of the most elaborate communications to the Association of Anatomists was his description of "Certain resemblances and peculiarities of the human brain," illustrated by specimens. Before the Section of Anthropology, Dr A. Hrdlicka presented a "Preliminary report on the somatology of the tribes of northwestern Mexico," in the course of which he defined the cranial types based on a large collection of osseous remains recently made by Dr Carl Lumholtz, and discussed the significance of their distribution in space and time ; while Dr Boas added further information of value in the ensuing discussion.

The contributions to psychology were mainly made before the American Psychological Association ; they were numerous and valuable. Specially important was the Presidential Address by Professor J. Mark Baldwin, of Princeton University, "On selective thinking." Observing in his introductory paragraph that

“By ‘selective thinking’ I understand *the determination of the stream of thought*, considered as having a trend or direction of movement, both in the individual’s mental history and also in the development of mind and knowledge in the world,” the author proceeded to discuss (1) the material of selective thinking, or the supply of thought variations; (2) the function of selection, or how certain variations are singled out for survival; (3) the criteria of selection, or what variations are singled out for survival, and (4) certain resulting interpretations. The elaborate exposition (soon to be printed in the *Psychological Review*) may not readily be summarized; but its scope, and at the same time its importance to the student of human activities, are sufficiently indicated in the well-chosen title and the introductory definition. No less noteworthy was the comprehensive paper on “Invention” by Professor Josiah Royce, of Harvard, in which he first sought to establish criteria for the definition of this highest product of human intelligence, and then discussed the bearings of original thought on human progress. The subject was discussed at some length by Jastrow, Boas, and McGee, who pointed out the importance of extending the study from individuals and limited groups representing a single stage in cultural development to representatives of other stages; the last named in particular held that, just as human development may be divided into two great stages (tribal society and national society) defined by social organization, or into the two stages of prescriptive culture and scriptorial culture defined by art of expression, or into supernaturalism and naturalism defined by prevailing form of opinion, or into symbolism and estheticism where the two principal stages are defined by artistic development, so the course of human progress must be divided into the stages of (1) discovery and adaptation, and (2) invention, when considered with reference to industrial development. Several other communications and discussions before the Psychological Association indicated the current drift of thought, which was summarized by Professor Royce in his felicitous remarks at the Naturalists’ dinner when he observed that the psychologists, who have hitherto based their methods of research and modes of interpretation chiefly on biology, are now coming to realize that their closest affinities are with anthropology, and that their future researches must be shaped accordingly.

As usual, the several branches of demonomy received the lion's share of attention in the anthropologic section. The subject of esthetology was scarcely touched, but three or four communications were devoted to technology. Foremost among these was that entitled "Dwellings of the Saga Time in Iceland, Greenland, and Vineland," by Cornelia Horsford. After describing the Norse Sagas, or prescriptorial traditions, which were chronicled on the acquisition of writing (chiefly by Ari Thorgilsson, 1067-1148), Miss Horsford defined the Saga Time as the period beginning with the colonization of Iceland in A. D. 875, and lasting for about 150 years. She then summarized the researches of recent decades concerning the habitations mentioned in the Sagas; thus far none of these have been identified in Denmark, Sweden, or Norway, but the ruins of several have been found in Iceland by representatives of the Icelandic Antiquarian Society and others, while some have been found in Greenland and a few have been identified with fair certainty in eastern Massachusetts, the "Vineland" or "Vineland the Good" of the Sagas. It was the chief purpose of the communication to compare these ruins and illustrate the survival of their type in modern houses, especially those of Iceland and Greenland; and to this end photographs and sketches of the ruins and the modern domicils were presented on the screen. The essential similarity in design and material of the ancient structures in the three countries was clearly shown by means of the pictures and the accompanying descriptions; and the identity of type with that of the modern Icelandic homes was made manifest. The communication was discussed at some length. Dr Boas pointed out the distinctness of the Viking house-type found in the three countries from any of those recognized among the American aborigines, including the Eskimo, while Dr Beauchamp emphasized the distinctness of the Vineland ruins from those of the Indians of eastern United States; and the presiding officer called attention to the thoroughness and discretion with which Miss Horsford's researches have been conducted, personally and with the aid of skilled collaborators, not only in New England, Greenland, and Iceland, but also in Scandinavia, Denmark, and England. Dr Beauchamp presented a communication on the "Loss of aboriginal arts and its significance," based on his researches and collections in central New York, pointing out that the distribution of relics seems to record

at least one invasion and conquest by a people of distinct technologic development. A "Note on Eskimo boot-strings," by John Murdoch, was read, and, with the preceding communication, was briefly discussed by several members.

Sociology was represented by a single communication, under the title "Conditions attending the rise of civilization," by W J McGee. Some of the facts and principles developed have already been treated in different papers in the *American Anthropologist*; others will appear later. Comments of value were made by Professor J. Mark Baldwin, Dr Franz Boas, and Dr Livingston Farrand.

But one communication dealt primarily with sophiology; this was the "Mythology of the Bella Coola," by Dr Boas. Among this interesting group of Indians beliefs and fiducial observances are highly developed, and are perpetuated through a social organization which is shaped and perpetuated in turn by the observances. Each clan has a creation myth, which is regarded as its richest possession, and which is communicated ceremonially on great occasions only, *e. g.*, in connection with the puberty feast; and it is the desire to acquire interest in or to hand down this intellectual heritage that controls marriage, adoption, etc. The author concluded with a comparison between the mythology of this tribe and the beliefs of other tribes in adjacent districts, as as well as in other regions. The subject was discussed by Professor J. McKeen Cattell, Dr Farrand, and Dr Beauchamp.

As a result of a symposium on the question "Will Winter meetings meet the Need of American Anthropologists for Organization?" it was decided to arrange for a meeting of the Section in New York during the Christmas holidays of 1898; it was also decided that steps should be taken toward the establishment or adoption of a standard American anthropologic journal, and a committee (consisting of Messrs Boas, Baker, Brinton, McGee, and Putnam) was appointed to take the requisite action.

The Ithaca meeting of the affiliated societies was noteworthy for the attendance of vigorous workers in science, and for the absence of amateurs and dilettanti. At the general session of the Naturalists, for which the other organizations adjourned, and again at the annual dinner, there were opportunities to take stock of the material; and the inventory showed something over 160

active investigators, with an average age probably falling below 35, endowed with ability and enthusiasm in exceptional degree, and enriched, almost without exception, by thorough training in high-grade institutions—it showed a regiment of actual scientists such as is seldom seen assembled.

ESKIMO BOOT-STRINGS¹

JOHN MURDOCH

It is obvious that the turned up and crimped moccasin sole of the ordinary Eskimo boot will be very likely to twist out of shape and “run down” at one side with wearing. This is prevented either by turning the sides up higher over the foot and “gathering” the folds closer or by the use of strings attached to the edge of the sole. The way in which these strings are used by the western Eskimo is fully described in my paper on the “Ethnological results of the Point Barrow expedition.”² Ordinary dry-weather boots have simply each a pair of tie-strings of seal thong sewed firmly between the edge of the sole and the upper, one on each side, just under the middle of the ankle. These are crossed above the heel, wound once or twice around the ankle, and tied in front. The waterproof sealskin boot, however, needs something more than this, because the thick sealskin or whaleskin sole grows very flabby when it comes in contact with water. The strings are arranged so as to hold up the soles at the toe as well as at the heel, and serve their purpose admirably. On each side of the foot are two little leather loops, one just back of the ball of the foot and one on the quarter. The string runs across the toes and back along the sides of the foot, passing through both loops. The ends are crossed above the heel and tied as before round the ankle. Obviously, pulling the ends of the string tends to draw the edges of the sole up at both ends.

As far as I know, this is the only published description of the use of boot-strings by the Eskimos. In fact when I was preparing the article mentioned above, I found that there was really

¹ Read before Section H, A. A. A. S., winter meeting, at Ithaca, Dec. 30, 1897.

² See pp. 131 and 134, Ninth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology.